

THE PRINCE OF GRAUSTARK

By
**GEORGE BARR
M'UTCHEON**
Author of "Graustark,"
"Beverly of Graustark," etc.

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CHAPTER XII. The Red Letter "B."

At the Gare St. Lazare Robin had a brief glimpse of Miss Guile as she hurried through the crowd down to the cab enclosure, where her escort, the alert young stranger, put her into a waiting limousine, bundled Mrs. Gaston and Marie after her and then dashed away, obviously to see their luggage through the douane.

She espied the tall figure of her fellow voyager near the steps and leaped forward to wave a perfunctory farewell to him. The car was creeping out toward the packed thoroughfare. He remained perfectly still, with uplifted hat, a faint smile on his lips and not the slightest sign of annoyance in his face. She smiled securely to herself as she leaned back in the seat and was satisfied!

Count Quinox found him standing there a few minutes later, twirling his stick and smiling with his eyes. Accompanying the old soldier was a slight, sharp featured man with keen black eyes and a thin, pointed mustache of gray.

This man was Gourou, chief of police and commander of the tower in Edelweiss, successor to the celebrated Baron Dangloss. After he had greeted his prince the quiet little man announced that he had reserved for him an apartment at the Bristol.

"I am instructed by the prime minister, your highness, to urge your immediate return to Edelweiss," he went on, lowering his voice. "The people are disturbed by the reports that have reached us during the past week or two, and Baron Romano is convinced that nothing will serve to subdue the feeling of uneasiness that prevails except your own declaration—in person—that these reports are untrue."

"I shall telegraph at once to Baron Romano that it is all poppycock," said Robin easily. "I refer, of course, to the reported engagement. I am not going to marry Miss Blithers, and that's all there is to be said. You may see to it, baron, that a statement is issued to all of the Paris newspapers today and to the correspondents of all the great papers in Europe and America. I have prepared this statement, under my own signature, and it is to be the last word in the matter. You shall have it when we reach the hotel—and that reminds me of another thing. I'm sorry that I shall have to ask you to countermand the reservation for rooms at the hotel you mention. I have already reserved rooms at the Ritz—by wireless. We shall stop there. Where is Dank?"

"The Ritz is hardly the place for"—But Robin clapped him on the back and favored him with the good natured, boyish smile that mastered even the fiercest of his counselors, and the minister of police, being an astute man, heaved a deep sigh of resignation.

Count Quinox was gnawing his mustache. "See here, Robin," he said, laying his hand on the young man's shoulder, "you are in Paris now, and not on board a ship at sea. Miss Guile is a beautiful, charming, highly estimable young woman, and, I might as well say it straight out to your face, you ought not to subject her to the notoriety that is bound to follow if the newspapers learn that she is playing around Paris with me. As a matter of fact, she refused to tell me where she is to stop while here, and I am uncomfortably certain that I shall not see her unless by chance. You may be sure that I shall not annoy Miss Guile, and you may be equally sure that she"—

"Just a moment, count," interrupted Robin, a cold light in his now smiling eyes. "You are getting a little ahead of the game. Miss Guile is not going to the Ritz, nor do I expect her to play around Paris with me. As a matter of fact, she refused to tell me where she is to stop while here, and I am uncomfortably certain that I shall not see her unless by chance. You may be sure that I shall not annoy Miss Guile, and you may be equally sure that she"—

"I beg your pardon, Robin, but I did not employ the word annoy," protested the count.

"That she takes me for a gentleman if not for a prince," went on Robin, deliberately completing the sentence before he smiled his forgiveness upon the old man. "I selected the Ritz because all rich Americans go there, I'm told. I'm taking a chance."

"Robin, my lad, I beg of you to consider the consequences that"—

"There's no use discussing it, old friend. Trust to luck. There is a bully good chance that she will send me about my business when the time comes, and then the salvation of Graustark will be assured." He said it lightly, but there was a dark look in his eyes that belied the jaunty

words.

"Am I to understand that you intend to—to ask her to marry you?" demanded the count, profoundly troubled. "Remember, boy, that you are the Prince of Graustark, that you"—

"But I am not going to ask her to marry the Prince of Graustark. I'm going to ask her to marry R. Schmidt," said Robin composedly.

In the baron's room at the Ritz that night there was held a secret conference.

The three conspirators were of the same mind. It was clear that something must be done. But what? That was the question. Gourou declared that the people were very much disturbed over the trick the great capitalist had played upon the cabinet; there were sullen threats of a revolt if the government insisted on the deposit of bonds as required by the agreement. More than that, there were open declarations that the daughter of Mr. Blithers would never be permitted to occupy the throne of Graustark. Deeply as his subjects loved the young prince, they would

force him to abdicate rather than submit to the desecration of a throne that had never been dishonored. They would accept William W. Blithers' money, but they would have none of William W. Blithers' daughter.

The afternoon papers had published the brief statement prepared by Robin in the seclusion of his stateroom on board the Jupiter immediately after a most enjoyable hour with Miss Guile. It was a curt and extremely positive denial of the rumored engagement, with the additional information that he never had seen Miss Blithers and was more or less certain that she had never set eyes on him.

A rather staggering coincidence appeared with the published report that Miss Blithers herself was supposed to be somewhere in Europe, word having been received that day from sources in London that she had sailed from New York under an assumed name. The imaginative French jour-

nal put two and two together and dwelt upon the possibility that the two young people who had never seen each other might have crossed the Atlantic on the same steamer, seeing each other frequently and yet remaining entirely in the dark, so to speak. Inspired writers began to weave a romance around them.

The newspapers also printed a definite bit of news in the shape of a dispatch from New York to the effect that Mr. and Mrs. William W. Blithers were sailing for Europe on the ensuing day, bound for Graustark.

However, the chief and present concern of the three loyal gentlemen in midnight conclaves was not centered in the trouble that Mr. Blithers had started, but in the more desperate situation created by Miss Guile. She was the peril that now confronted them, and she was indeed a peril.

"By jove!" exclaimed Dank, so loudly that his companions actually jumped in their seats.

"What alls you, Dank?" demanded the baron, removing his eyes from the young man's face long enough to glance fearfully at the transom.

"I've got it!" cried the soldier. Count, you remember the big red letter B on all of her trunks, don't you? Hobbs is positive he"—

Count Quinox sprang to his feet and banged the table with his fist.

"By jove!" he shouted, suddenly comprehending.

"The letter B?" queried Gourou, perplexed.

"The newspapers say that she sailed from New York under an assumed name," went on Dank, thrilled by his own amazing cleverness. "There you are! Plain as day. The letter B explains everything. Now we know who Miss Guile really is. She's"—

"Maud!" exclaimed Quinox, sinking back into his chair.

"Miss Blithers!" cried Gourou, divining at last. "By jove!" And thus was the jovian circle completed.

Robin was informed bright and early the next morning. In fact, he was still in his pajamas when the news was carried to him by the exhausted Dank, who had spent five hours in bed, but

none in slumber. Never in all his ardent career had the smart lieutenant been so bitterly afflicted with love-sickness as now.

"I don't believe a word of it," said the prince promptly. "You've been dreaming, old chap."

"That letter B isn't a dream, is it?" "No, it isn't," said Robin, and instantly sat up in bed, his face very serious. "If she should turn out to be Miss Blithers, I've cooked my goose to a crisp. Good Lord, when I think of some of the things I said to her about the Blithers family! But wait! If she is Miss Blithers do you suppose she'd sit calmly by and hear the family ridiculed? No, sir! She would have taken my head off like a flash."

"I suppose you'll see nothing more of her, your highness," remarked Dank, a sly hope struggling in his breast.

"You'd better put it the other way. She'll see nothing more of me," lugubriously.

"I mean to say, sir, you can't go on with it, can you?"

"If there is really anything to go on with, Dank, I'll go on with it, believe me."

The lieutenant stared. "But if she should be Miss Blithers, what then?" "It might simplify matters tremendously," said Robin, but not at all confidently.

Later on, while they were breakfasting in Robin's sitting room, Hobbs brought in the morning newspapers. He laid one of them before the prince and jabbed his forefinger upon a glaring headline.

"Miss Blithers Denies Report. Signed Statement Mysteriously Received. American Heiress Not to Wed Prince of Graustark." Shall I read the article, sir?

Robin snatched up the paper and read aloud for himself.

The following card appeared at the head of the column and was supplemented by a complete resume of the Blithers Graustark muddle:

"Miss Blithers desire to correct an erroneous report that has appeared in the newspapers. She is not engaged to be married to the Prince of Graustark, nor is there even the remotest probability that such will ever be the case. Miss Blithers regrets that she has not the honor of Prince Robin's acquaintance, and the prince has specifically stated in the public prints that he does not know her by sight. The statements of the two persons most vitally affected by this disturbing rumor should be taken as final. Sufficient pain and annoyance already have been caused by the malicious and utterly groundless report. The name of Maud Applegate Blithers was appended to the statement, and it was dated Paris, Aug. 29."

It appears that the signed statement was left in the counting room of the various newspapers by a heavily veiled lady at an hour agreed upon as "about 10 o'clock." There was absolutely no clue to the identity of this woman.

"Well, she appears to be here," said Robin as he laid down the last of the three journals and stared at Dank as if expecting hope from that most unreliable source.

"I suppose you will now admit that I am right about the letter B," said Dank sullenly.

"When I see Miss Guile I shall ask point blank if she is Maud Applegate, Dank, and if she says she isn't I'll take her word for it," said Robin.

"And if she says she is?"

"Well," said the prince ruefully, "I'll still take her word for it."

"And then?"

"Then I shall be equally frank and tell her that I am Robin of Graustark. That will put us all square again, and we'll see what comes of it in the end."

The day was warm and clear, and Paris was gleaming. Robin stretched his long legs in a brisk walk across the Place Vendome and up the Rue de la Paix to the boulevard. Here he hesitated and then retraced his steps slowly down the street of diamonds, for he suspected Miss Guile of being interested in things that were costly. Suddenly inspired, he made his way to the Place de la Concorde and settled himself on one of the seats near the entrance to the Champs Elysees. A man came up and took a seat beside him.

"Good morning, Mr. Schmidt," said the newcomer, and Robin somewhat gruffly demanded what the deuce he meant by following him. "I have some interesting news," said Baron Gourou quietly.

"From home?" asked Robin carelessly.

"Indirectly. It comes through Berlin. Our special agent there wires me that the offices of Mr. Blithers in that city have received instructions from him to send engineers to Edelweiss for the purpose of estimating the cost of remodeling and rebuilding the castle—in other words, to restore it to its condition prior to the Marxian rebellion fifteen years ago."

There was a tantalizing smile on the baron's face as he watched the changing expressions in that of his prince.

"Are you in earnest?" demanded Robin, a bright red spot appearing in each cheek. The baron nodded his head. "Well, he's got a lot of nerve!"

"I shudder when I think of what is likely to happen to those architects when they begin snooping around the castle," said Gourou dryly. "By the way, have you seen Miss Guile this morning?"

Robin's cheeks were now completely suffused. "Certainly not."

"She was in the Rue de la Paix half an hour ago. I thought you might"—

"You saw her, baron?"

"Yes, highness, and it may interest you to know that she saw you."

"The deuce you say! But how do you know that it was Miss Guile?"

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You've no means of knowing.

"It is a part of my profession to recognize people from given descriptions. In this case, however, the identification was rendered quite simple by the actions of the young lady herself. She happened to emerge from a shop just as you were passing, and I've never seen any one, criminal or otherwise, seek cover as quickly as she did. She darted back into the shop like one pursued by the devil."

"Where did she go from the Rue de la Paix?" asked Robin impatiently.

"To the Ritz. I was there almost as soon as she. She handed an envelope—containing a letter, I fancy—to the carriage man and drove away in the direction of the Place de l'Opera. I have a sly notion, my prince, that you will find a note awaiting you on your return to the hotel. Ah, you appear to be in haste, my young hunter."

"I am in haste. If you expect to keep alongside, baron, you'll have to run," cried the prince, and was instantly in his seven league boots.

"Won't you sit down, baron? I'll be at liberty in a minute or two," he said, on reaching his room at the hotel, and coolly proceeded to scan the brief message from Miss Guile.

To be Continued

Some Queer Ones

Strong man so effusive in shaking hands with girl in San Francisco her shoulder was dislocated.

Because eggs are \$1.50 a dozen in some war countries congress will increase the salaries of consuls there.

Spanking on the proper spot is good for babies, but sugar and bare legs are injurious, a Harvard baby expert declares.

Wild man caught in Kansas so caloused from going barefooted he scratches matches on bare soles of feet.

Cows wear one piece dresses on Sir Francis Webster's Texas ranch, each having two hemp suits (without lingerie) a week.

Because she wants street in front of her home repaired Mrs. S. E. Holcomb is running for mayor of Rapid City, S. D., and says if elected the street sure will be.

When asked if a man of seventy-two could run a fire department properly Chief Doane of Plainfield, N. J., replied, "Look at me; I do!" and refused to resign after fifty years a fireman.

Why Constipation Injures.

The bowels are the natural sewerage system of the body. When they become obstructed by constipation a part of the poisonous matter which they should carry off is absorbed into the system, making you feel dull and stupid, and interfering with the digestion and assimilation of food. This condition is quickly relieved by Chamberlain's Tablets. Obtainable everywhere.

FIFTY YEARS A PURSER.

Thomas Kinsey of the St. Paul to Retire After Return Trip.

Thomas Kinsey, purser of the American liner St. Paul, will retire from the sea on his return to England, when he will have completed his eleven hundredth trip across the Atlantic.

Kinsey is about seventy-five years old and holds the record for length of service with transatlantic lines. He has been a purser for more than fifty years, during which time he has visited nearly every country on the globe and has encircled the world several times. He will retire to his home in Southampton, where Mrs. Kinsey is awaiting him.

McQUADY.

The W. M. U. met Wednesday evening.

Jolly Davis' house burned Monday.

Mrs. Geo. Ball went to Louisville Tuesday to be the guest of her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Len Pate.

Mrs. Gabe Wright has returned from a visit to Mr. and Mrs. Tom Fowler, of Brandenburg.

Mr. and Mrs. Bob Kennedy have gone to Somersport on a visit.

Wm. Davis and Rev. J. F. Kneue went to Louisville Wednesday on business.

E. M. Board is ill at this writing.

Wm. Davis has purchased a new car. Rose Taul is home from Whitesville.

A CRIME AVENGED

When Mexico Was Punished For the Massacre at the Alamo.

SLAUGHTER OF OUR HEROES.

The Desperate Bravery of Colonel James Bowie and the Treachery That Resulted in the Butchery of Davy Crockett and His Little Band.

When the massacre of the Alamo occurred on March 6, 1836, there was a cry for vengeance over the entire country. Hardly an American in Texas able to bear arms but who presented himself to avenge this crime. "Remember the Alamo!" was the battle cry when Sam Houston and his largely augmented army went out to meet the Mexicans.

Sam Houston of Tennessee had served with General Jackson in the Indian war. He had gone to Texas with the distinct object of wresting that country from Mexico. Revolutionary convulsions in Mexico gave the American colonists welcome opportunities for complaints, which led to collisions with the Mexican authorities.

General Santa Anna, who by a successful revolutionary stroke had put himself at the head of the Mexican government, attempted to reduce the unruly Americans to obedience. In 1835 armed conflicts took place, in which the Americans frequently had the advantage. The Texans declared their independence from Mexico on March 3, 1836. The declaration was signed by about sixty men, among whom there were only two of Mexican nationality.

Meantime Santa Anna advanced at the head of a Mexican army, entered Texas and on Feb. 23 laid siege to the Alamo fort at San Antonio. Atrocious butchery marked the progress of the soldiers. The Mexican general made frequent assaults upon the fort to rout the defenders. The small handful of Americans, however, were able to withstand the siege for eleven days. They were starving, but in spite of this they were able to inflict death upon about 1,600 of the enemy.

When the siege was at its height Davy Crockett, with about thirty frontiersmen, cut his way through the Mexican forces and, rushing into the fort, shouted, "Boys, we're here to die with you!" Finally the day came when the little band could withstand the assault no longer. It was the memorable 6th of March. It was a hand to hand struggle, but each American before he gave up his life made the enemy pay an awful toll.

Colonel James Bowie was one of the bravest of the Americans, and when his body was discovered it lay in the center of a circle of slain Mexicans. At last only six defenders remained alive, among whom was Davy Crockett. Santa Anna promised them protection if they would surrender, but the moment they laid down their arms they were butchered like sheep. More than a dozen sword wounds pierced Crockett before he fell.

Mad with rage at the Alamo tragedy, Sam Houston gathered the settlers together. He showed an unusual amount of strategy, knowing that his band of followers would not be able to compete with the Mexicans, so he retreated in order to scatter the pursuing Mexican force until San Jacinto was reached.

At San Jacinto the Americans charged the Mexican force, which was much superior in number, but throughout the roar of the cannonading and the rattle of musketry that wild yell, "Remember the Alamo!" could be constantly heard above the din. It stirred the patriots and made them fight like demons. In barely twenty minutes after the first onslaught the Mexicans were flying in every direction, with Houston and his men following them.

Houston had his horse shot from under him, and a bullet had smashed his own ankle. This made no impression upon him, for he paused not for a moment until the entire Mexican force was destroyed. The Mexican loss was 1,300 killed and captured, and among the latter was Santa Anna.

It was the battle of San Jacinto that secured for Texas her independence, and for his valor Sam Houston received as his pay the honor of being the first president of the new republic, which was later to become the largest state in the Union. It was through Houston's influence ten years later that Texas became a member of the United States—with the result, the Mexican war. Texas, by the way, has been under no less than six flags—that of France, Spain, Mexico, the Texas republic, the Southern Confederacy and Old Glory.—Philadelphia Press.

Buried Him Alive.

That the danger of being buried alive is a very real one is proved by some amazing cases cited by that eminent French physician, Dr. Thoinot, recently. The most striking story he related was the case of General Ormna, who was struck by a bullet during a retreat from Moscow and was thought to be dead. Prince Eugene ordered Commandant Tascher, his aid-de-camp, to have the general buried in the snow. This was carried out, but General Ormna's aid-de-camp expressed the desire to take back the body to France. It was dug out of the snow and placed on a cart, when shortly afterward the general revived. He returned to France and was present at the funeral of Tascher, the man who had buried him alive.

What we make of ourselves depends upon the ideals which we habitually hold. Our lives are shaped upon our mental models.

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Annual Easter Egg Hunt at Park Place.

Irrington, April 24.—(Special).—Misses Nona and Dona Lyddan entertained a number of little friends Sunday afternoon at an Easter egg hunt. This joyous affair is celebrated annually at Park Place. Numerous children participate.

Most disfiguring skin eruptions, acrofula, pimples, rashes, etc., are due to impure blood. Burdock Blood Biters as a cleaning blood tonic, is well recommended. \$1.00 at all stores.